



Springfield-Greene County
Health Department
Helping people live longer, healthier, happier lives

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From the Office of the Director of Health

Put a Lid on Lead – Prevent Lead Poisoning

Every day many children in Missouri are exposed to lead in their own home. Children poisoned by lead exposure can suffer learning and behavioral problems. Their kidneys, brains and nervous systems can also be permanently damaged.

Children under six years of age are most at risk for lead poisoning. Lead can be found in paint, mini-blinds, dishes, fishing lures and other items. Protect your children by keeping them away from peeling or chipping paint.

“We can test homes for lead and can test children for lead poisoning,” says lead poisoning prevention program coordinator Cathy Johnson. “Children with lead poisoning often don’t appear to be ill. A blood test may be the only way to know if your child has been poisoned.”

To have your child tested for lead poisoning, contact your child’s health care provider or call the health department’s WIC office at 417-864-1079.

To protect children from lead, follow these precautions.

- Always have children wash their hands before eating and drinking.
- Wash children’s toys and pacifiers frequently.
- Clean windowsills, floors and play areas regularly.
- Because dirt may contain lead, have children play in grassy areas and remove their shoes before they enter the house.
- Feed children foods high in calcium like milk, spinach, cheese, yogurt, broccoli and green vegetables.
- Feed them foods high in iron like lean, red meat, chicken, fish, iron-fortified cereal and dried raisins and figs.
- Encourage foods high in vitamin C like oranges, orange juice, tomatoes, grapefruit, grapefruit juice and green peppers.

The only way to prevent the damaging effects of lead poisoning in a child is to protect them from being poisoned in the first place. October 24-30 is Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in Missouri. This year’s theme is “Put a Lid on Lead.”

Protect your child today by putting the lid on lead in your home.

- Take time during this important week to learn about the dangers of lead poisoning.
- Have your child tested for elevated blood lead levels.
- Purchase a lead testing kit for your home at a local home improvement store.
- Call the Springfield-Greene County Health Department at 417-864-1658 for more information.

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